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Viewing cable 06MEXICO4958, A DAY AT THE REVOLUTION

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06MEXICO4958	2006-09-01 18:47	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Mexico

Appears in these articles:

<http://wikileaks.jornada.com.mx/notas/eu-siguio-con-lupa-la-movilizacion-poselectoral>

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VZCZCXRO3356
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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 011847Z SEP 06
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2991
INFO RUEHXC/ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAHLA/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY IMMEDIATE
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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77011
2006-09-01 18:47:00
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Embassy Mexico
CONFIDENTIAL
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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2991
INFO RUEHXC/ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAHLA/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY IMMEDIATE
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CDR USNORTHCOM IMMEDIATE
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [MX](#)
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MEXICO 004958

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/31/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [MX](#)
SUBJECT: A DAY AT THE REVOLUTION
REF: MEXICO 4707

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR CHARLES V. BARCLAY,
REASONS: 1.4(B/D).

11. (C) Summary: With all eyes now focused on the Mexican Congress and the Revolutionary Democratic Party's (PRD) long-threatened effort to deny President Fox the opportunity to deliver his final annual report there, poloff spent much of August 31 with a range of PRD contacts to gain further insight into their plans for the event. The leadership of the PRD congressional delegation remains committed to Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's (AMLO) plan to humiliate the President within the halls of Congress. Meanwhile, a larger group of PRD supporters plans to converge on the Congress from around the city, to provide a supportive audience outside. At least one contact reports that AMLO continues to see himself as the legitimate president-elect, willing to provoke a crisis of governability in order to force Felipe Calderon to relinquish the presidency. While in the short term, the PRD's increasingly radical tactics provide unusually dramatic political theater, we continue to believe that they ultimately will lead to a further weakening of the party's unity, prestige and influence. End Summary.

PRD,s Hierarchy Rallies the Troops

12. (C) With President Fox's annual report to Congress set for September 1, high-level PRD officials have spent recent days debating how they should respond, with the consensus apparently forming that the PRD congressional faction should do everything possible to deny Fox the opportunity to deliver his final annual report. On August 31, poloff accompanied Mary Carmen Soria Narvaez, assistant to AMLO's foreign policy advisor, Dr. Jose Maria Perez Gay, to a meeting of the PRD,s Central Executive Committee, at which PRD tactics were vigorously debated, including by the party's recently elected Senate and Chamber of Deputy coordinators.

13. (C) In well-received remarks, Carlos Navarette, the incoming PRD Senate coordinator, reiterated the party line that the elections were fraudulent, reflecting the determination of Fox and his allies to put Felipe Calderon in office. He said that while some in the PRD think that the "struggle" is just about gaining the presidency, it was actually about achieving greater institutional and social reform, which would be discussed at AMLO's September 16 National Democratic Convention (NDC). He insisted that current GOM institutions no longer function and that "Mexico needs a struggle, a revolt, that transforms these institutions." He told the assembled crowd that PRD actions during President Fox's address would demonstrate the depth of Mexico's political crisis, and insisted that Fox must not succeed in delivering his speech. He urged PRDistas to support AMLO and the congressional protest, declaring "we cannot allow the movement to die...we are obligated to (AMLO)."

14. (C) Javier Gonzalez Garza, the recently-elected PRD coordinator in the lower house, criticized the PRI, the Green (PVEM) and New Alliance parties for having struck a deal with

the PAN in electing congressional leadership, insisting that "parties that have negotiated with the PAN have lost their legitimacy." He said the PRD needed to seek support from other parties such as Convergencia and the Workers Party (PT), whose support would leave the PRD within two votes of blocking the 2/3 majority the PAN would need to amend the constitution. Likewise, he urged the PT and Convergencia to support the PRD gubernatorial candidate in Tabasco, much as the PAN and PRI had backed a single candidate in Chiapas in an unsuccessful effort to keep the PRD candidate from office (reftel).

PRD Moderate Critical of Party's Radical Turn

15. (C) After Gonzalez Garza's speech, Poloff met with well-connected PRD member and advisor to the Mexico City municipal government (GDF) Guillermo Flores. Flores was critical of AMLO and what his movement was doing to the party, saying that many in the party did not understand or agree with AMLO, but that they continued to follow him because "they have no exit...they have no other leader to guide them in the right direction." According to Flores, AMLO is convinced he is the legitimate President-elect and

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his plan is to form an alternative government at the September 16 NDC. He sees AMLO as using the goal of "institutional reform" as a guise to achieve his real objective of becoming President. To do this, his strategy is to make the country ungovernable, both through strikes and strenuous PRD opposition in Congress, until Calderon renounces his position. Yet Flores doubts AMLO's efforts will last long, noting that Mexico enjoys macroeconomic stability and that movements such as AMLO's only prosper in countries where there is uncertainty and instability.

16. (C) Flores lamented that while AMLO had greatly strengthened the party in recent years, his current "antics" were undoing all of the contributions he had made. He noted, for example, that by supporting AMLO, the PRD had "driven the PRI into the PAN's arms." Among other things, this had resulted in a PAN-PRI deal to divide key congressional leadership positions among themselves, denying the PRD the influence over the congressional agenda normally inuring to the second place party.

17. (C) Flores said that with respect to the protest inside the Chamber, there are several plans under consideration. One plan is to have the PRD Deputies/Senators enter the Chamber first and barricade the door, not allowing Fox -- or perhaps even other congressional delegations -- to enter. Alternatively, they will allow Fox to enter, but shout insults and protests throughout the speech. Press reporting suggests that the final tactical decision would be made by AMLO himself just hours before the speech.

Protest Includes a Cast of Thousands

18. (SBU) According to press reports and embassy contacts in the Mexican security services, Mexico City Mayor Alejandro Encinas expects five or six groups of protesters marching from various directions of the city toward the Zocalo, Mexico City's central historic square, at noon today. Groups expected to participate include members of several major labor unions, the Organizations for National Dialogue (a mix of moderate left-wing groups), and a small number from the more radical Popular People's Party of Oaxaca (APPO). Leaders of these organizations expect roughly 30,000 participants, who will then link up with an estimated 10,000 demonstrators waiting in the Zocalo. At 4pm, march organizers will make a decision about how to proceed to the Congress, with speculation that AMLO himself may lead them. It appears that one goal of the protesters is to prevent President Fox, non-PRD legislators, and other invitees

(including members of the diplomatic corps) from reaching the Congress. Law enforcement authorities have already deployed thousands of officers around the Congress as well as in the city center, to maintain order.

Encampments Will Come Down Soon

¶9. (C) Looking beyond today's political drama, Sandoval, Soria, and Flores each predicted in separate discussions that they expect that the encampments that currently block Paseo de la Reforma and the city's central square would soon come down, although they differed as to the precise timing. Soria speculated they would be removed in about one week, whereas Sandoval expected them to be removed following the September 16 NDC, although neither seemed privy to a formal decision to disband them. Soria observed that the encampments were being financed in part by the party -- which she said was well-funded -- and in part by GDF officials, who were contributing a portion of their pay checks. (Note: The press recently reported that incoming members of the PRD congressional delegation also had agreed to contribute a portion of their salaries to the protest movement. End note.)

PRD "Moral Leader" Gone AWOL

¶11. (C) On an unrelated issue, Soria told poloff that PRD founder, presidential candidate, and "moral leader" Cuauhtemoc Cardenas is no longer in line with PRD thinking, describing him as "the face of historical fraud" for his unwillingness to maintain a long-term protest movement in the face of the apparently fraudulent 1988 presidential election. She described him as "collaborating" with those international contacts that supported Felipe Calderon during

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the election.

Comment: High Drama in the Congress

¶12. (C) With the PRD's final plan of action for President Fox's annual report to be determined only this afternoon and by AMLO himself, today's congressional session represents political theater of the very highest order. Yet from the perspective of the PRD's political future, we cannot help believe that the performance will be more of a tragedy than a comedy. An opinion poll published in today's Reforma indicates that 68% of Mexicans approve of Fox's performance as President, reflecting his broad and fairly resilient personal popularity, even in the face of numerous political setbacks. Moreover, it is our impression that even many Mexicans who do not consider themselves ideological soulmates of the President strongly respect the prestige of the office and are offended by any affront to its dignity. While AMLO may feel driven to use today's event to carry out a personal vendetta against the President -- and while he continues to command the loyalty of many in his party in this effort -- it is difficult to see how this strategy can result in anything but the party's further loss of prestige.

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BASSETT